U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

FACILITATION

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

- Some structure is in everybody's interest
- But if the person running the meeting has a stake in the outcome, people fear that control of the meeting will lead to control of the outcome
- A "facilitator" is given some control over the process, in return for being neutral on content
- Facilitator still consults with the audience on major process changes

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THE KEY PRINCIPLE

The facilitator acts on behalf of everybody in the meeting, providing a structure that serves everybody's interests

Facilitator Responsibilities

- Helps design the meeting process
- Works with the group to set the agenda and ground rules
- Summarizes comments or concerns
- Helps group observe agreements about time limits, staying on track

Facilitator Responsibilities - Continued

- Suggests group process techniques
- May call on speakers
- Restates conflicting positions – so both sides can hear
- Summarizes decisions made by the group

QUALIFICATIONS OF A FACILITATOR

- Skilled in active listening and communicating concerns
- Knowledgeable about group process design
- Personal ability to avoid judging and remain neutral
- Sufficient knowledge about the subject matter so he/she can follow the conversation

THE RECORDER ROLE

- The Recorder keeps a visual summary of what people say
- May use flipchart, wall covered with butcher paper, or laptop with digital projector
- Recorder's summary usually serves as the record of the meeting

POINTERS FOR RECORDERS

- Each participant is the expert on his/her comment – capture the comment the way the participant wants it
- Ask people to review recorder's summary, and make corrections (but only to their own comment)
- Most important to summarize content

OTHER MEETING LEADERSHIP ROLES

- **Spokesperson: The person who speaks for the Corps, or states the Corps' position**
  - **Facilitator and Recorder should never be put in the position of speaking for the Corps**
- **Fact Person ("expert"): Limited to factual issues only**
- **Time Keeper: Based on agreed upon agenda and ground rules**

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REMEMBER:

All people in other roles must work through the facilitator or they will undermine the facilitator's control of the meeting

TEAM EXERCISE

- Complete instructions are on page
- Work in your assigned team on your assigned case
- By the end:
  - Identify Problems and Opportunities
  - Develop Objectives and ways to measure effectiveness (“principles”
  - Identify a set of alternatives
- Rotate as facilitator and recorder
- Give each other critique

MARK